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CONTENTS

NORTH VIETNAM: Hanoi is pushing its campaign to bring more men into the armed forces. (Page 1)

LAOS: The Communists are continuing to nibble away at government strongpoints near Long Tieng. (Page 3)

MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS: The Israelis continue to be evasive on specific aspects of a settlement. (Page 4)

INDIA: The assassination of a leading politician in Calcutta may lead to cancellation of elections in West Bengal. (Page 5)

TURKEY: Violence sparked by radical students has increased. (Page 7)

POLAND-USSR: The new Soviet credit will increase Poland's economic dependence on Moscow. (Page 8)

URUGUAY: The Tupamaros have released Brazilian Consul Dias Gomide. (Page 9)

BURMA: Ne Win's health (Page 10)

NORTH VIETNAM: Hanoi is pushing its months-old campaign to bring more men into the armed forces.

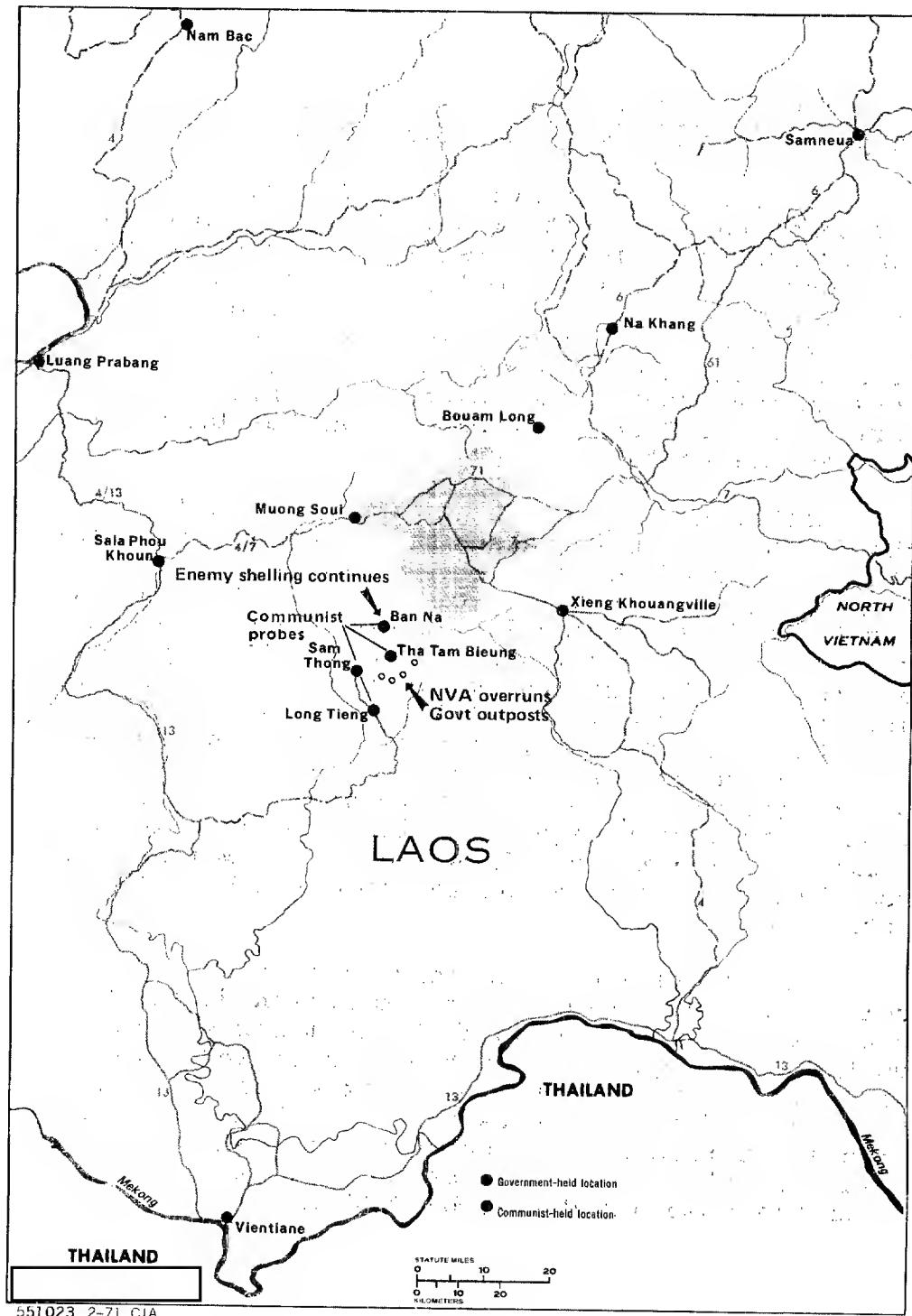
Radio Hanoi announced on 18 February that the Communist Party's central committee has convened a conference to review the regime's efforts to mobilize more women for tasks normally performed by men in the economy and at home. The announcement was specific enough to leave the clear impression that the mobilization effort is designed to free more men for duty at the front. According to the broadcast, party head Le Duan and Premier Pham Van Dong addressed the meeting.

Gatherings of this kind aimed at mobilizing the North Vietnamese masses for one purpose or another are standard fare, but this one seems more than ordinary on a number of counts. The central committee does not usually sponsor run-of-the-mill conferences, nor do leaders from Hanoi's top echelon, particularly Le Duan, normally show up at routine affairs. Moreover, the timing of this meeting seems important; it obviously is more than coincidence that the subject of manpower availability is touched on at this high level in public so soon after the Laotian operation began and within weeks of a central committee plenum that almost certainly weighed the possibility of such an allied move and Hanoi's reaction to it.

This conference doubtless is part of the accelerated recruitment and conscription drive that has been under way in North Vietnam for several months. In light of recent events in Indochina, however, a fresh effort to exhort women to take up the plow and simultaneously run the household could signal a period of even more intense manpower mobilization for the front lines as well as for North Vietnam's home guard.

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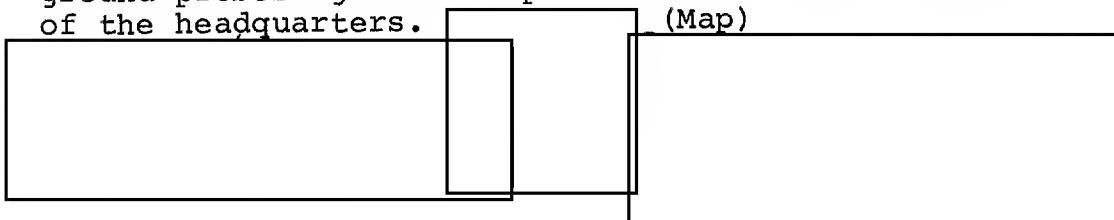
LAOS: The Communists are continuing to nibble away at government strongpoints commanding the approaches to Vang Pao's headquarters complex at Long Tieng.

North Vietnamese forces this weekend attacked and overran four Lao irregular outposts northeast of Long Tieng in the vicinity of Tha Tam Bleung. The outposts were garrisoned by elements of two guerrilla battalions which withdrew to the southwest after sustaining casualties of eight killed and 25 wounded. Enemy losses are unknown. Three of the outposts were considered of vital importance to the over-all defense of the Long Tieng sector. The irregular base at Tha Tam Bleung itself was also subjected to enemy ground probes.

Ban Na, another linchpin in the defense of Long Tieng, remains under strong pressure. The base, which contains vital artillery emplacements, was shelled on at least a dozen occasions during the weekend. Small-scale ground clashes were also reported around its defensive perimeter as well as around the nearby base at Sam Thong. Despite the intensity of enemy shelling, the airstrip at Ban Na has been reopened, and medical evacuation and resupply missions are once again under way.

Meanwhile, in the immediate Long Tieng area, government irregulars beat back several small-scale ground probes against outposts within a mile radius of the headquarters.

(Map)



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C MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS: Although the Israelis have attempted to avoid the appearance of a negative response in their reply to Egypt's latest proposal, they have continued to be evasive on specific aspects of a settlement.

In a communiqué following yesterday's cabinet meeting, the Israelis officially welcomed Egypt's readiness to reach a peace agreement and expressed their own readiness for meaningful negotiations on all subjects. The government, however, rejected what it termed as Egypt's demand for total withdrawal and stated that Israel would not withdraw to the pre-June 1967 lines. Referring to an Israeli statement on 4 August 1970 in response to the US peace initiative, the communiqué indicated that Israel's position remains that it will be prepared to discuss the withdrawal of Israeli forces to secure, recognized and agreed borders to be determined in peace agreements. A reference in the communiqué to the Israeli desire for the continuation of discussions under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring "in negotiations between the governments concerned" would appear to be a reiteration of Israel's long-standing demand for direct negotiations which the Arabs have consistently refused.

Yesterday's communiqué may not be Israel's final answer to the Egyptian proposal. Cairo's expression of readiness to enter into a peace agreement caught the Israeli Government by surprise and any decision on what would constitute acceptable borders as part of any final settlement will be reached only after considerable debate within Israel.

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INDIA: The assassination of a leading politician in Calcutta on 20 February probably presages more violence and may lead to cancellation of scheduled elections in the state of West Bengal.

The fatal stabbing of Hemanta Basu, respected chairman of the small left-of-center All-India Forward Bloc, climaxes two months of increasing violence in West Bengal. The press reports that at least 189 political assassinations have occurred in the state since January. Other candidates in the state and national elections scheduled for 10 March have had unsuccessful attempts made on their lives.

The police have refused publicly to blame any party or group for Basu's murder. The Communist Party of India/Marxist (CPM)--the largest and more extreme of the two major Communist parties in West Bengal--has, however, initiated a campaign of violence and intimidation in connection with the electoral campaign that makes it suspect in the eyes of the public. CPM spokesmen, aware of the public reaction to the latest killing, have denied responsibility for the assassination and have sought to blame it on the US Central Intelligence Agency.

Some police officials reason that the CPM has long sought elections in West Bengal in anticipation of winning a major victory and thus would be reluctant to risk the cancellation of the poll that might follow Basu's murder. They suspect that the killers were members of the extremist, pro-Maoist, Naxalite movement. The Naxalites, unlike the CPM, are publicly committed to forcing cancellation of the elections.

The parties opposing the CPM in the elections are attempting to stir up public feeling against the Marxists, and a mass rally to protest the killing of Basu, scheduled for 24 February, could lead

to new and widespread violence. Army units previously brought into the state to assist the police in trying to maintain order may now be augmented. The chances of restoring order appear slim, however, and postponement or even cancellation of the elections is becoming increasingly likely.

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TURKEY: Violence sparked by radical leftist student groups has increased and has spread to out-lying provinces.

Ankara police fought a seven-hour battle on 19 February with hundreds of defiant students defending their barricaded dormitories with small arms, explosives, and firebombs. About 200 of the students, many of them girls, were arrested. A large crowd which had gathered at the scene was barely prevented by police from lynching one of the students.

Following this struggle a large number of bombings, attempted bombings, and hit-and-run gunfire attacks took place in Ankara. Bombings were also reported in Bursa and Gaziantep. Students from another university protesting the police action blocked a main highway into Ankara for several hours until dispersed by gendarmerie troops. A faculty group sympathetic to the leftist students appealed to the chief of the Turkish General Staff for military intervention.

In a marathon meeting with leading members of his Justice Party, Prime Minister Demirel charged that the student disorders were fomented and supported by "outside, international sources." He called for an increase in the government's constitutional power to deal with such outbreaks.

The survival of the Demirel government may well depend on the success with which it handles the present rash of disorders, which are beginning to assume the dimensions of urban guerrilla warfare. The military have thus far refrained from acting on their own initiative, but they can hardly tolerate further disintegration of the government's authority.

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POLAND-USSR: The apparently substantial Soviet credit that was recently announced will increase Poland's economic dependence on Moscow and leaves the USSR with a strong stake in the Gierek regime.

Two Polish Government sources did not specify the total amount of aid but have said the credit includes some hard currency. Part of the credit probably will be used to increase Polish purchases of food and other consumer goods. Any hard-currency portion is likely to be used in part to help defray costs of imports of livestock feed and meat, items that Warsaw is anxious to procure in the West for immediate delivery. This new aid supplements an earlier Soviet commitment to supply two million tons of grain on an accelerated delivery schedule this year.



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URUGUAY: The Tupamaros reportedly made good on their promise to release the Brazilian consul when emergency security measures ended by freeing Dias Gomide yesterday in exchange for a claimed \$1-million ransom paid by his family.

No details about his six-and-one-half-month captivity or further information concerning the two hostages still held--British Ambassador Jackson and US agronomist Fly--were available last night. The Tupamaros have repeatedly indicated the desire to release Fly in exchange for a concession by the Uruguayan Government; although President Pacheco has refused to negotiate, the private nature of the Gomide transaction sets a precedent for a possible nonofficial deal for Fly.

Any prospective trade for Fly, however, may rest on whether the government attempts to reimpose security measures. The terrorists have previously indicated that such an action would make the atmosphere unacceptable for bargaining.

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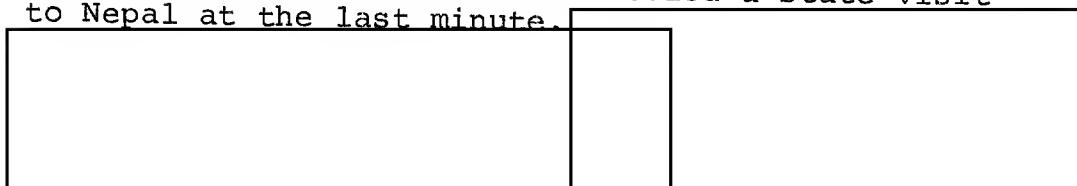
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NOTE

BURMA: General Ne Win's hurried trip to London this weekend for medical treatment suggests a serious health problem. The General, who had returned from a medical checkup in the UK on 9 January, looked fit at that time. Last week he canceled a state visit to Nepal at the last minute.

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